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Tuesday, 21 August 2001, 3 p.m.
New York

President:	Mr. Valdivieso	(Colombia)
Members:	Bangladesh	Mr. Ahsan
	China	Mr. Wang Yingfan
	France	Mr. Doutriaux
	Ireland	Mr. Corr
	Jamaica	Mr. Ward
	Mali	Mr. Issouf Oumar Maiga
	Mauritius	Mr. Koonjul
	Norway	Mr. Strømmen
	Russian Federation	Mr. Gatilov
	Singapore	Ms. Lee
	Tunisia	Mr. Jerandi
	Ukraine	Mr. Kulyk
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Eldon
	United States of America	Mr. Cunningham

Agenda

The situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian Question

Letter dated 15 August 2001 from the Representatives of Mali and Qatar to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2001/797)

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the interpretation of speeches delivered in the other languages. The final text will be printed in the *Official Records of the Security Council*. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room C-178.

01-51647 (E)

The meeting was resumed at 3.20 p.m., 21 August 2001.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): The next speaker inscribed on my list is the representative of Indonesia. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Widodo (Indonesia): Let me begin, Mr. President, by extending to you my delegation's congratulations on your assumption of the presidency at a time when the Security Council is considering an issue of critical importance to all of us. Let me also commend Ambassador Wang of China for the able manner in which he conducted the work of the Council last month.

This urgent meeting of the Council has, rightly, been called to consider a highly volatile situation — and, indeed, an explosive one — in the occupied Palestinian territories, including Jerusalem, which threatens to engulf the whole Middle East region.

For quite some time now, Indonesia has observed with deepening concern the progressive deterioration of the situation of the occupied territories. The ominous manifestations of this grave situation — the seizure and occupation of Orient House and other Palestinian institutions in East Jerusalem, targeted assassinations and incursions into Palestinian lands, closures of Palestinian towns, and deadly military actions resulting in heavy Palestinian civilian casualties, including children — are aggressive and illegitimate practices by Israel, the occupying Power, in total contravention of international law and conventions and resolutions of international legitimacy. They also reflect its intentions to renege on past peace accords, commitments and agreements already concluded with the Palestinians.

On two previous occasions the Security Council failed by a slim margin to adopt a draft resolution by which a United Nations observer force would be dispatched to the occupied Palestinian territories to protect the people from suppression and persecution at the hands of the Israeli authorities. Now, months later with even more scores of Palestinian deaths and wounded, the question that begs to be answered is when will the Security Council assume its responsibility to stop this culture of violence of protracted occupation.

This grave state of affairs is apparent to the entire international community. It is inconceivable that the occupying Power speaks of pursuing the path to peace and calls for an end to the violence, as there can be no doubt that the occupying Power is seriously endangering the peace process by taking measures contrary to it both in letter and spirit.

Such unilateral action is a fatal blow to the peace agreements and undermines all the arduous past efforts undertaken towards attaining comprehensive peace in the region. These illegal measures are creating a new status of conditions on the ground and are thereby transforming the political status of Jerusalem. What makes this action even more reprehensible is that it violates one of the central issues of this conflict.

Given the current dangerous situation and its potential to fall into the abyss of a new and more vicious cycle of violence and bloodshed, the Security Council is duty-bound to take urgent and remedial action. This should include calling upon Israel to immediately end its occupation of Orient House and Palestinian institutions and cease all acts that are detrimental to the safety and well-being of the Palestinian people. Israel should accept the undeniable fact that lasting security can never be achieved while it continues its arbitrary policies and transgressions against the Palestinian people.

It is crucial that wisdom, foresight and leadership prevail. The only path out of this crisis and towards achieving lasting peace is the resumption of peace negotiations based on the full implementation of Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973), including the land-for-peace principle. Towards this end, it is essential that the process implementing the Mitchell recommendations begin in the presence of international monitors.

In conclusion, this political conflict of more than half a century has exacted too much suffering and taken too many lives. This is a conflict that has as its crux the occupation of a land and the just struggle of the Palestinian people for national independence and self-determination continuing well into this new millennium. Thus, those who seek to reverse what is irreversible are endangering their own security, and peace will remain elusive. Hence, this situation should brook no further delay. The Security Council is strongly urged to take resolute action in order to

forestall a worsening situation with incalculable consequences.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank the representative of Indonesia for his kind words addressed to the presidency.

The next speaker on my list is the representative of Turkey. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Cengizer (Turkey): My delegation avails itself of this opportunity to congratulate you, Mr. President, on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council, and wishes you every success. We thank your predecessor in this important work, His Excellency Mr. Wang Yingfan, Ambassador of the People's Republic of China, for his able guidance of the affairs of the Security Council.

Turkey subscribed to the European Union declaration yesterday on the situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question. We would like to further underline certain aspects of the situation, which we feel deserve the attention of the parties and the international community, and this is why I am taking the floor now on behalf of Turkey.

To be sure, the increase in tension and the lack of sufficient efforts and resolve to bring about the proper reciprocal steps in order to break the vicious circle of violence — hence the further deterioration of the situation — are causes for worry. Thus, if the parties continue to hold on to their known positions and fail to control these worrisome developments, we fear the whole region is threatened with being dragged into undesirable consequences. Seen in this light, the convening of the Security Council reflects the discontent and anxiety of the international community. Indeed, the current practices and the situation in the occupied territories are alarming in many respects.

It is impossible to justify the acts of terrorism. We firmly believe that acts of terrorism do not serve the rightful cause of the Palestinian people, and we expect the Palestinian administration to take more effective measures against the perpetrators and promoters of such acts and prevent them. On the other hand, it is obvious that measures taken against such acts should be proportionate. Evidently, any encouragement of extremism solely serves the interests of the adversaries of peace while hindering those efforts expected from the Palestinian administration.

The closure of Orient House and other Palestinian institutions in East Jerusalem by Israel does not contribute to the efforts directed at easing the tensions. Clearly, such acts will not change the known position of the international community regarding the situation in the occupied territories. We therefore expect that that measure, which has been declared a temporary one, will be lifted forthwith, and that conditions permitting the continuation of the useful function of Orient House in attaining peace and peaceful coexistence will be created.

We cannot afford to lose still more precious time and more human lives before we fully understand that the alternative to peace would have unbearable costs for everyone. At this juncture, such a misjudgement would only increase the historic responsibility of the leaders vis-à-vis their peoples. The only way to attain peace is through the resumption of political negotiations between the parties. The recipe for peace is to be found in the relevant Security Council resolutions, including resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973), in the Madrid and Oslo accords, and in the principle of land for peace.

The proposals contained in the report of the Mitchell Committee, accepted by both parties, lay bare the method by which to return to the path of peace. Those proposals need to be implemented speedily instead of being countered with unrealistic preconditions. It is high time for everyone to understand that procrastination in this regard serves the interests of the extremists and causes the continuation of violence.

Given the present conditions, we think that the deployment of an impartial observer force in the region is needed more than ever before. We hope that the parties will reach agreement on such a deployment, which would benefit both of them. It is with that understanding that we call upon both parties to resume political dialogue.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank the representative of Turkey for the kind words he addressed to me.

The next speaker is the representative of India. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Sharma (India): It is a pleasure, Sir, to see you presiding over the Council. Let me also thank you

for calling this meeting and for giving us the opportunity to speak on this vital issue at a very critical juncture. Since the representative of South Africa has spoken on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement, we will confine ourselves to making some supplementary remarks.

We are deeply dismayed and gravely concerned over the spiraling violence in Jerusalem, the West Bank, the Gaza Strip, other parts of the Palestinian National Authority area and Israel in recent weeks. The tragic cycle of violence that has engulfed the region has undermined prospects for lasting peace and stability based on a just settlement of differences and has led to a most tragic toll of lives and to regrettable loss of property. It is imperative that this chain of action and reaction be broken before the level of violence escalates beyond control and the prospects for lasting peace recede further. The consequences of unfettered violence could be disastrous, and we support appeals for the abjuration of violence and for a cessation of hostilities.

The escalating situation in the region has had a severe impact on the Middle East peace process and has seriously dented the trust and confidence between the parties — a necessary condition for forward movement in terms of the time-frame envisaged in negotiated agreements on interim and final status issues. Apart from the inherent danger of extremist and intransigent thinking gaining the upper hand and radicalizing public opinion, such a situation vitiates the prospects for a peaceful resolution of the conflict.

We deeply regret the loss of so many lives through wanton acts of terrorism. The closure of Orient House and other Palestinian offices in Jerusalem and Abu Dis and the excessive reaction to the incidents of violence have led to a regrettable exacerbation of the conflagration. This will inexorably lead to a deterioration of the situation through heightened violence and will have an adverse impact on the resumption of dialogue. Moreover, such actions also impair the carefully crafted agreements and understandings that are the basis for the dialogue.

We remain convinced of the need for dialogue and peaceful negotiations in finding a just, comprehensive and lasting settlement of all issues in accordance with Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973) and the principle of land for peace. A worsening situation of violence cannot be a solution to the complex and sensitive issues at stake. It should not be allowed to undermine the peace process for which the leadership of Palestine and Israel have striven so hard. Consequently, it is all the more imperative to eschew violence and exercise utmost restraint in order to create a atmosphere conducive to the resumption of dialogue. We hope that, with the requisite will and determination and with a strong commitment to establishing durable peace, diplomacy and statesmanship will prevail. We trust that the wisdom and sagacity displayed in concluding past agreements will be a guide to a just and successful outcome.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank the representative of India for the kind words he addressed to me.

The next speaker is His Excellency Mr. Ahmad Hajihosseini, Acting Permanent Observer of the Organization of the Islamic Conference to the United Nations, to whom the Council has extended an invitation under rule 39 of its provisional rules of procedure.

I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Hajihosseini: It is my pleasure at the outset, Mr. President, to extend to you greetings from the Secretary-General of the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC), His Excellency Mr. Abdelouahed Belkeziz, and to express our sincere thanks for the promptness with which you have convened this important meeting at the request of the OIC. I should like also to congratulate you on your assumption of the presidency for the month of August. We are confident that under your able leadership the work of the Council will be carried out in a constructive manner.

I am speaking on behalf of the Organization of the Islamic Conference. We share the views of many previous speakers, especially our member States, on the grave and deteriorating situation in the occupied Palestinian territories, including Jerusalem, as a result of the unwarranted escalation of the Israeli military campaign against the Palestinian people, Israel's illegal seizure of Orient House and other Palestinian institutions in occupied East Jerusalem, and the illegal and inhumane Israeli practices against the Palestinian population, which continue unabated.

Anyone following the ongoing events in Palestine would conclude that the present Israeli Government is indulging in the worst draconian practices ever undertaken by an occupying Power in the present era, an era which we thought would be the epoch of self-determination, human rights and the preservation of human dignity and livelihood, even in occupied territories.

A glance at television newscasts these days will give a clear picture of the tragedies that are befalling the Palestinians in the occupied territories at the hands of the Israeli occupation forces. We are constantly witnessing through the media all those scenes of horror, terror, indiscriminate devastation, persecution and repression of Palestinians at the hands of those forces. We are seeing young children wandering and roaming around amid the rubble of what used to be their homes, now blown up or demolished and removed by Israeli bulldozers. We are watching funeral processions of martyrs, including children and infants, day after day throughout Palestine. We are also witnessing the assassination of civil society leaders by Israeli forces. We are hearing about Israel using the most destructive military warplanes to level to the ground houses and civilian installations in the occupied Palestinian territory, and we are seeing land being confiscated by force and without any legal basis and being turned into construction sites of illegal colonial settlements. Furthermore, we are hearing about the use of "excessive force", to borrow the now familiar expression, against the Palestinian people.

There are countless other such Israeli practices, which I need not elaborate and describe further but which tear apart the Palestinian territories. They include the siege and starvation of the Palestinian people and depriving them of their most fundamental right to dignity, for no other reason than because they seek an end to the Israeli occupation of their land. We know that Israel, the occupying Power, has practically shrunk the Palestinian presence to a small portion of the Palestinian territory — no more than some 20 per cent of it. Israel is attempting to further shrink that portion to forcibly disperse more Palestinians from their lands and ancestral homes in which they have lived for thousands of years, thus joining the waves of Palestinian refugees that have been in exile and in diaspora over the past fifty years.

By doing so, Israel is luring new Jewish immigrants from all over the world to the land usurped from its Palestinian owners, to live in illegal colonial settlements. Israel keeps on building these settlements despite the denunciation of such actions by the international community.

Most of the illegal and inhuman Israeli practices I have just referred to, which can be corroborated by millions of television viewers all over the world, can certainly be regarded under international law as war crimes whose perpetrators should be liable and accountable for these crimes.

As a continuation of the practices I just spoke of, the Israeli authorities recently came out with a very dangerous precedent in the city of Al-Quds Al-Sharif when they resorted to the closure of Orient House, the institution and headquarters of the Palestinian delegation to the peace talks and of Palestinian institutions that extended social and humanitarian services to the Palestinians in the city of Al-Quds.

It is noteworthy that these Palestinian institutions, recognized by Israel, had been regularly engaged in handling Palestinian affairs in occupied East Jerusalem since 1967. East Jerusalem is considered in the resolutions of this Council as part and parcel of the occupied Palestinian territory, to which all international provisions regulating the affairs of occupied territories should apply. In fact, as several speakers have pointed out, Israeli Foreign Minister Shimon Peres actually wrote to his Norwegian counterpart when signing the Oslo Agreement in 1993,

> "The Palestinian institutions of East Jerusalem and the interests and well-being of the Palestinians of East Jerusalem are of great importance and will be preserved."

The Israeli Government' s recent illegal measures show only one thing: that Israel is reneging on the guarantees and commitments it made. Instead, it is snatching away and depriving East Jerusalem of its special status, which served also to protect Palestinian institutions in the city. This unwarranted action is a grave development and a new Israeli provocation of Muslims worldwide, who have a deep-rooted attachment to Al-Quds Al-Sharif and have religious and spiritual ties to it dating back thousands of years.

Based upon what has been stated thus far, the Organization of the Islamic Conference urges the Security Council to take the necessary measures to provide protection to the Palestinian people and to

compel Israel to put an end to its bloody military campaign against them, to restore Palestinian institutions in East Jerusalem and to lift the restrictions imposed upon entry to Al-Aqsa Mosque and other Muslim and Christian places of worship in the city.

Violence can only beget violence, and the excessive inhuman subjugation and suffering to which the Palestinian people have been subjected since 1967 are driving them to despair. It leaves them with no other option but to undertake a legitimate and just resistance to the Israeli occupation, which is one internationally recognized right of self-defence.

The protection we seek should restrain Israel from continuing its illegal and inhuman practices targeting the Palestinian people and clear the air for the resumption of the peace process, which has been deadlocked for years as a result of the procrastination and delaying tactics of successive Israeli Governments in implementing the resolutions and decisions of international legitimacy based on relevant Security Council resolutions and the land-for-peace principle.

It has become crystal clear to any observer of the question of Palestine and the Middle East as a whole that there will be no peace as long as the occupied territories have not been liberated and as long as Israel continues to reject the spirit and letter of the decisions of international legitimacy, thus preventing the Council and the United Nations from discharging their basic and legitimate role in the settlement of the Middle East conflict.

I thank you again, Mr. President, for convening this important meeting and express the hope that the Council' s deliberations will prevail in relieving the Palestinian people and the populations of the occupied Arab territories of the suffering and injustices being imposed upon them by the Israeli occupation forces. In doing so, the Council will move towards restoring its own prestige and authority, which is needed in maintaining international peace and security.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank Mr. Hajihosseini for his kind words addressed to me.

Before calling on the next speaker, I should like to inform the Council that I have received a letter from the representative of Mexico in which she requests to be invited to participate in the discussion of the item on the Council's agenda. In conformity with the usual practice, I propose, with the consent of the Council, to invite that representative to participate in the discussion, without the right to vote, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Charter and rule 37 of the Council' s provisional rules of procedure.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

At the invitation of the President, Ms. Lajous (Mexico) took the seat reserved for her at the side of the Council Chamber.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): The next speaker inscribed on my list is the representative of Namibia. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Andjaba (Namibia): I wish to congratulate you, Sir, on you assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for this month and for arranging this very important meeting. I also wish to commend Ambassador Wang Yingfan of the People's Republic of China for the excellent manner in which he conducted the work of the Council in July.

Yesterday, the Permanent Observer of Palestine briefed the Council about the tragic events in the occupied Palestinian territory and pointed to the fact that the Council continues to ignore the crisis while it is engaged in discussing topics such as the protection of civilians in armed conflict and the prevention of armed conflict. My delegation could not agree more with such a conclusion. It is, indeed, unfortunate that the Security Council has to date been paralysed and has failed to do anything about the tragic situation unfolding in the occupied Palestinian territory. The Council has clearly forsaken its responsibilities, as outlined in Articles 24 and 37 of the Charter of the United Nations, to maintain international peace and security. It has furthermore failed to enforce its own resolutions aimed at resolving the situation in the Middle East.

What started out as an irresponsible provocation — the visit to Al-Haram Al-Sharif last year — has, sadly, already resulted in hundreds of deaths and injuries, and the peace process has suffered perhaps irreparable harm.

Despite this situation, the international community is allowing the carnage to continue in the occupied Palestinian territory. The Israel Defence Force continues to use excessive force against Palestinian civilians, resulting in hundreds of deaths and injuries, untold suffering and widespread

destruction. The Israeli Government continues furthermore to practice a policy of extrajudicial killings, which is unacceptable and violates international law. This practice must be stopped and measures must be put in place to ensure accountability for those killings already committed and to deter similar acts in the future. In the light of this, it was even more shocking yesterday to hear some Security Council members preaching a hands-off approach, while some delegations adopted a neutral position in a completely one-sided conflict. This is totally unfair and unacceptable, to say the least.

The economic suffocation of Palestinians continues through the illegal blockade of towns, which not only deprives them of their freedom of movement but also makes it impossible for them to earn their livelihood in a normal manner. These acts constitute gross violations of the Fourth Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, of 12 August 1949. The violations should stop and Israel, the occupying Power, should scrupulously abide by its legal obligations and responsibilities under the Convention. In this connection, we support the call for the convening of a conference of the High Contracting Parties to the Fourth Geneva Convention in order to enforce the Convention in the occupied Palestinian territory, including Jerusalem. Such an action would help to address the situation on the ground.

Arguments and counter-arguments are being made about violence and resistance by the Palestinians. However, the basic fact remains that Palestine is a nation under foreign occupation — a nation living under dire humanitarian conditions — and the Security Council, which is responsible for the maintenance of international peace and security, is paralysed and unwilling to do anything about it. No one can therefore expect the Palestinians to sit idly by and wait until they are completely dominated or wiped off the face of the earth. The crux of the matter is that the occupation must stop.

There can be lasting peace in the Middle East only when the just aspirations of the Palestinian people, including their right to self-determination and the establishment of an independent State of their own, are restored. Their rights can never be sacrificed because of the occupying Power's single-minded insistence on security.

The situation in the occupied Palestinian territory continues to degenerate daily, which could lead to a point of no return. The recent occupation by Israel of Orient House and other Palestinian institutions constitutes serious violations by the Israeli Government of earlier agreements between itself and the Palestinian National Authority. This is a cause for serious concern. Unless these actions are reversed, they may have dire consequences that can push the whole region into a cycle of violence, destruction and bloodshed.

It is therefore of the utmost importance for the Security Council to act swiftly and decisively in terms of its responsibility under the United Nations Charter and to establish a United Nations observer force for the protection of Palestinian civilians. As a starting point, the Security Council should preserve its credibility by, at least, adopting the draft resolution currently before it. Although from our point of view the draft is weak, it could, with the necessary political will — I repeat: with the necessary political will — attract consensus from all Council members and provide a road map for the resumption of negotiations.

Furthermore, the parties should show political will and courage to de-escalate the situation and ensure that negotiations are resumed, with the implementation of the Mitchell report as a starting point. In this connection, my delegation welcomes the important role being played by the Secretary-General, and we urge him to continue with these efforts. Outside the United Nations, States with influence over the parties should, instead of inaction, live up to their responsibilities by actively promoting the peace process and moving the parties to the negotiating table.

In conclusion, the basis of negotiations and of a just and lasting peace remains Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973). The peace process should be put back on track and the implementation of these resolutions should thus be ensured, while the existing agreements between the parties should be honoured.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank the representative of Namibia for his kind words addressed to me.

The next speaker is the representative of Cyprus. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Hadjiargyrou (Cyprus): Allow me at the outset to express to you, Sir, the warm congratulations of my delegation on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for this month. Our congratulations also go to His Excellency Ambassador Wang Yingfan for his able leadership in guiding the work of the Council during the previous month.

Cyprus has aligned itself with the statement delivered by the delegation of Belgium on behalf of the European Union earlier in the debate. I would, however, like to delineate the position of my Government on an issue that we consider of particular importance for our region.

Since the beginning of the recent violent events in the Middle East, the Government and people of the Republic of Cyprus have expressed sorrow and concern over the escalation of violence and the loss of so many lives. The current situation aptly demonstrates the explosive consequences of the long delay in bringing about a solution to the Palestinian problem. All interested parties and the international community at large should consider with the utmost seriousness the tragic reality of everyday conflict, which brings with it the simply unacceptable loss of life and property and violations of human rights that affect the lives of millions of innocent people on a daily basis. Once more we urge both parties to show maximum restraint, since it has been demonstrated time and again that resort to violence not only fails to produce any tangible benefits for either side, but, on the contrary, aggravates an already tense situation.

We strongly condemn any and all forms of terrorism, including the recent suicide bombings in Jerusalem and Haifa that resulted in deaths of many innocent civilians. At the same time, we urge Israel to desist from actions the thrust of which is the collective punishment of the Palestinian population, and to avoid a disproportionate response to violence.

Both Israel's decision to close Orient House and other institutions in Jerusalem and the recent incursions of the Israeli army into the Palestinian territory are particularly disturbing. Such actions provoke the feelings of the Palestinian people and exacerbate the current explosive state of affairs. Action brings reaction and with it further blows to the prospects of peace. We call upon Israel to reverse this decision as soon as possible and abide by its commitments to respect the inviolability of those institutions.

Cyprus condemns, in an unequivocal manner, the extrajudicial executions of Palestinians by Israel. These executions are illegal under international law and unacceptable in the eyes of the international community. At the same time, we urge the Palestinian Authority to exert every effort in order to control outbursts of violence. Only in this way will the destructive cycle of hatred subside.

I take this opportunity to express my Government's particular concern for the suffering of the most vulnerable part of the population — women and children — and its dismay at the tragic loss of these innocent people's lives. We believe that the provisions of the Fourth Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War of 1949, should be fully respected.

The Republic of Cyprus reiterates its support for a just and lasting settlement to the Arab-Israeli conflict based on resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973), including the concept of the inadmissibility of the acquisition of territory by war, the right of every State in the region to live in security and the principle of land for peace. A lesson drawn from the present escalation of violence is that unless peace efforts and initiatives are based on international law the peace achieved will remain on very shaky foundations.

Solutions to problems must be perceived as fair and accepted as such by the populations concerned, particularly in cases where we have prolonged occupation and denial of the legitimate rights of these populations to live in peace, dignity and security with their neighbours. Otherwise the sense of resentment and opposition will undoubtedly sweep away any agreements that are based on ephemeral considerations.

The Republic of Cyprus strongly supports the non-selective, comprehensive and immediate implementation of the recommendations of the Mitchell report, which we hope will put an immediate end to the violence and create the necessary conditions for the resumption of the peace process. In this respect, we fully subscribe to the position expressed by the European Union and other members of the international community concerning the need for the establishment of a monitoring mechanism to assist in the implementation of the report's recommendations.

The Republic of Cyprus strongly calls upon both sides to refrain from using armed force against each other and to return instead to the negotiating table as

soon as possible. The establishment of peace in the region cannot and will not be achieved unless the Palestinian issue, which constitutes the core issue of the Middle East problem, is tackled with courage, determination and the necessary political will by all parties.

Cyprus believes that the forces of moderation on both sides should be strengthened, while at same time the extremists should be isolated. Only in this way will we be able to revive the hope of the vast majority of the peoples of our region for the establishment of a permanent peace and to realize their vision for a new Middle East. For in this cradle of three major religions and civilizations, coexistence cannot but constitute the only acceptable way. History, after all, has given us ample proof of that.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank the representative of Cyprus for his kind words addressed to me.

The next speaker is the representative of Lebanon. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Tadmoury (Lebanon) *(spoke in Arabic)*: I would like to thank you, Sir, for giving me the floor, and to congratulate you on assuming the presidency of the Council for this month. I wish you every success in your work. I would also like to pay tribute to your predecessor, His Excellency the Permanent Representative of the People's Republic of China, for his efforts during the previous month.

For more than 10 months, the Palestinian cause has been going through a critical phase that exceeds our apprehensions. Since the visit of the Israeli Prime Minister last September to the Al-Aqsa Mosque, Israeli forces have entered Orient House and other Palestinian institutions in Jerusalem in a provocative manner. Much blood of innocent people has been shed. Houses and civil establishments have been destroyed, and farms have been razed. All these acts of aggression and incursions have completed a dark series of historical humiliations of the Palestinian people that has lasted more than 50 years.

The occupation of Orient House is fraught with serious consequences because it cancels a legal status previously recognized by Israel as part and parcel of the negotiation process. This is also an alarming step backwards in the peace process and is a serious violation of previous commitments. It has also shown that Israeli leaders are throwing out the basis for peace negotiations and international legal documents and relegating them to the past.

The insistence by Israeli leaders that Palestinian rights be eliminated outright is bound to send Israel and the whole region into an infernal spiral of violence. Security cannot be imposed by force, especially when Israel adopts policies of targeted assassinations that are organized in specific lists and commits flagrant violations of international law, particularly international humanitarian law, even though the Council has condemned such violations when it has discussed questions of armed conflict throughout the world.

Not very long ago, we had the impression that prospects for peace were around the corner, and we saw that the players in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict were getting closer to discussing sensitive issues, such as the status of Jerusalem and the question of Palestinian refugees. Furthermore, serious negotiations took place with the Syrian side on the security provisions after Israel agreed to a total withdrawal from the Golan, in what was called the Rabin promise or guarantee.

But any observer of the situation can see that every time Israel gets closer to peace with the Arabs, it takes a step backwards and thereby gives rise to suspicion and shows arrogance and condescension over the Palestinians and other Arabs, who are entitled to their rights and would not relinquish them despite Israel's might and its use of it.

The problem today in Israel is not realizing that those who are defending their identity, destiny and independence have passed the barriers of fear and humiliation. Israeli society and Government should try to fathom this new reality. A lasting, just and comprehensive peace in the entire area is in the interests of all those concerned.

I will not go through all the daily suffering that has affected all strata of the Palestinian population, with a minimum of security. This people has begun its legitimate struggle by using the stones from its own territory to affirm its identity and its right to a promising and secure life, like its Israeli neighbours. But the Israeli occupation forces have answered with fighter planes, tanks, cannons, with violence

unequalled throughout the world, a world which daily seeks respect for basic human rights.

Today, more than ever, the Council is called upon to restore peoples' rights and to shoulder its responsibilities for maintaining international peace and security. It must return the Orient House and all the other Palestinian institutions in Jerusalem to their owners because this is not simply a question of buildings or headquarters. These are outstanding symbols of a just cause, which should be settled justly and equitably. The time has also come to establish an international monitoring protection mechanism that will put an end to Israeli atrocities and that will establish objective conditions for relaunching the peace process.

It is also worth noting that a just and comprehensive peace in the Middle East is an integral whole that requires an immediate end to Israel's violence and the resumption of negotiations by all the parties to the conflict — Palestinians, Syrians, Lebanese and Israelis. These negotiations must always be based on international resolutions, the Madrid terms of reference and the principle of land for peace. They should be based on the agreements concluded in previous negotiations with the Palestinians and the Syrians.

Real peace will not be established unless Palestinians are given their right to self-determination and without ensuring to Palestinian refugees the right to return to their homes, and to work towards the creation of an independent State with Jerusalem as its capital. We must also ensure Israeli withdrawal from the Syrian Golan to the border of 4 June 1967 and the completion of Israel's withdrawal from south Lebanon.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank the representative of Lebanon for his kind words addressed to me.

The next speaker inscribed on my list is Mr. Ali Abbas, Deputy Permanent Observer of the League of Arab States to the United Nations, to whom the Council has extended an invitation under rule 39 of its provisional rules of procedure. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Abbas (*spoke in Arabic*): Allow me at the outset to congratulate you, Mr. President, on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for this month, as we meet to debate an issue of great importance. Its implications make it incumbent on the Council to deal with it objectively in order to realize not only the aspirations of the Governments and people of the region, but also those of the entire international community.

The suffering of the Palestinian people has been exacerbated as a result of the continuous bloody campaigns of oppression perpetrated by the Israeli occupation forces and groups of armed settlers. These campaigns have escalated recently through the use of fighter-bombers and tanks in an unprecedented bombardment of children, civilians and the institutions of the Palestinian National Authority and through broadcasting the names of those who should be eliminated. These acts are clear indications of State terrorism.

All this makes it incumbent on the Council and the international community as a whole to exert pressure on Israel to put an end to these bloody campaigns, to abide by the agreements concluded with the Palestinian side, to withdraw its forces immediately from the occupied Palestinian territories, including Holy Jerusalem, and to resume immediately the negotiation process between the two parties. Otherwise, the cycle of Israeli violence will never end and will indeed threaten the entire region.

Therefore, it is incumbent on the Council to reinstate the credibility of the international community and the Council in dealing with these issues that threaten international peace and security by taking the following steps.

First, the Council should call on Israel, the occupying Power, to abide by the relevant resolutions of international legitimacy, in general, and, more specifically, to abide by the articles of the Fourth Geneva Convention of 1949 relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War. It should also make every possible effort to end Israeli practices and quickly provide international protection to the Palestinian people.

Secondly, the Council should hasten the convening of a conference of the High Contracting Parties to the Fourth Geneva Convention, so as to consider enforcing the Convention in the occupied Palestinian territories, including Jerusalem. The Council should also emphasize the need to put an end to all settlement activities and to remove all existing ones, in implementation of Security Council resolution

465 (1980). Doing so would serve to de-escalate the situation and help revive the peace process towards a comprehensive, just and lasting peace.

The Council should adopt a resolution that would provide the necessary protection to the Palestinian people by sending international observers.

Thirdly, the Council should reiterate the right of return of all Palestinians, or compensate them in conformity with international resolutions adopted in that regard.

Fourthly, the Council should call on Secretary-General Kofi Annan to take the initiative, as an international impartial mediator, to establish a just, comprehensive and lasting peace in the Middle East and to return the situation to the state it was in prior to 28 September 2000. That would make it possible to resume the peace process on the basis of resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973), as well as other relevant resolutions.

The Council is requested to issue a clear and unequivocal condemnation of every attempt made by Israel to weaken the authority of the Palestinian National Authority and that of President Yasser Arafat. We would like to point out the dangerous implications of such a policy, as it is bound to create anarchy. It is incumbent upon the Council to adopt a resolution condemning Israel's recent activities and escalations, namely, its occupation of Orient House, and to call on Israel to return Orient House and all other institutions it has seized to the Palestinian Authority, in conformity with international agreements concluded between the two parties and on the basis of resolutions of international legitimacy. The Council should also take immediate measures to end the state of siege and the policy of starvation that has been imposed on Palestinians by Israel, so that international organizations may deliver aid to the Palestinian people without obstruction from Israel.

From this forum we urge the international community to promptly provide all the necessary economic and humanitarian assistance to the Palestinian people so as to help them cope with the impact of Israeli actions on the infrastructure of the Palestinian economy.

We also call on the Council to take the necessary actions to force Israel to take the courageous political decision of returning to the negotiating table and to take advantage of any proposal aiming to restore balance to the serious and deteriorating situation, specifically the Egyptian and Jordanian proposal and the recommendations of the Mitchell Committee.

Allow me to address the United States of America, as it is a major co-sponsor of the peace process, which the Arabs have adopted as a strategic choice. We call on the United States to work towards peace and to strive to keep the situation from deteriorating further.

It is necessary for Israel to know for certain that violence can in no way provide it with the security to which it aspires. That will never be realized as long as Israel continues to pursue its oppressive and expansionist policies of Judaizing Jerusalem. Israel must realize that the only way to bring peace to the Middle East is by putting an end to its occupation and by fully abiding by the principle of land for peace and relevant resolutions of international legitimacy.

To emphasize the so-called unity of the Council is a sort of twisting of reality, as that unity simply means giving Israel the right to veto under American supervision. That serves to render the Council helpless and unable to take measures that would restore the confidence of the Arab world in this body. The Security Council, which is the main authority responsible for bringing a just peace to the Palestinian people, must act to recognize the legitimate needs of the Palestinian people. In conclusion, the League of Arab States wishes to call on the Council not to allow Council unity to come at the expense of the rights of the Palestinian people but act to end this last occupation in the world.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank Mr. Ali Abbas, the Deputy Permanent Observer of the League of Arab States to the United Nations, for his kind words addressed to me.

The next speaker inscribed on my list is the representative of Cuba. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Rodríguez Parrilla (Cuba) (*spoke in Spanish*): Yesterday, I had the opportunity to greet you, Mr. President, in my capacity as the Acting Chairman of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People. It is now my pleasure to greet you once again, on behalf of Cuba.

This is the fifth time that the Security Council has held a public debate on the escalation of violence in the occupied Palestinian territories — including East Jerusalem — since the provocative visit by the Israeli Prime Minister to Al-Haram Al-Sharif on 28 September 2000. It is increasingly clear that the causes of the current escalation are to be found in the ongoing occupation by Israel of Palestinian territory and in the non-compliance with the agreements adopted as part of the peace process, including resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973). As long as this situation persists, the cycle of violence will inevitably continue.

The recent occupation of Orient House and the incursion of troops and equipment into the town of Jenin, among other examples, are also serious actions that run contrary to the Oslo agreements.

Despite the widespread condemnation of the international community, Israel continues to carry out so-called extrajudicial killings as a matter of policy, in violation of the most fundamental norms of international law.

Cuba considers the heroic struggle of the Palestinian people against Israel's occupation and aggression to be legitimate and unquestionable. We heartily support the intifada. We condemn suicide bomb attacks against innocent Israeli civilians, acts which have clearly been rejected by the Palestinian National Authority. At the same time, we oppose the manipulation of such isolated acts to question the exercise of self-defence by the Palestinian people.

The resolutions that the Security Council has managed to adopt on this issue — the most recent being resolution 1322 (2000), which was adopted on 7 October 2000 — have been flagrantly ignored by Israel, without the Council taking any action. Despite the fact that debates in the Council have made it very clear that it is the wish of the international community that this body assume its responsibilities under the Charter of the United Nations, the Council has virtually taken no practical steps — although in other situations it acts surprisingly fast.

While innocent civilians, including children, die, are wounded and oppressed on a daily basis and the provisions of the 1949 Fourth Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War are violated, the United States has blocked every effort that has been madé to send an international force to protect Palestinian civilians.

The most recent example occurred on 27 March, when after countless delaying tactics, the United States vetoed a draft resolution submitted by the Non-Aligned Movement caucus in the Council, which, among other things, called for an immediate cessation of violence and the return to the positions and agreements existing before September 2000 and presented a formula that would eventually make it possible to establish some machinery to protect Palestinian civilians.

But there are many other examples. A total of 23 vetoes have been imposed by the United States on draft resolutions submitted in the Security Council on the question of Palestine since 1973, and everything suggests that the list will continue to grow.

Moreover, tanks, missiles, aircraft and all kinds of weapons are provided by the United States to Israel, means that are then used for action against innocent Palestinian people.

Accordingly, a permanent member has become a de facto accomplice to the escalation of violence and killing in the world's most massive, flagrant and systematic violation of human rights today, which is occurring in the occupied Palestinian territories, including East Jerusalem, without that member's suffering any consequences whatsoever.

There is no justification for the continued delay in the establishment by the United Nations of a protection force or other similar impartial machinery that could protect innocent Palestinian people and monitor the situation on the ground. The least that the Security Council could do today in the critical circumstances in the Middle East is to adopt the draft resolution that has been prepared.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank the representative of Cuba for his kind references to me.

The next speaker on my list is the representative of Mexico. I invite her to take a seat at the Council table and to make her statement.

Ms. Lajous (Mexico) (*spoke in Spanish*): First of all, allow me, Mr. President, to congratulate you on the way you have been conducting the work of this historic session.

The Government of Mexico observes with growing concern the re-emergence of violence in the Middle East that today is threatening to spread. We deplore the irreparable loss of human life, most of

these people being innocent civilians, and we reiterate our firm belief that violence only begets further violence. The peace process begun in Madrid and Oslo had a promising start, fostering hope within the international community that at last there would be a solution to a conflict that has accompanied the United Nations since its creation. However, the current stagnation is a cause of dismay for peace-loving countries such as Mexico.

For many years we have maintained that over and above the age-old rivalry and over and above the harm that one of the parties may have incurred from the other, it must be understood that belonging to the same region inevitably requires peaceful coexistence and mutual respect as indispensable guidelines for peace.

We have recognized, in particular, the right of all States in the region to live in peace within secure and internationally recognized borders and the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination and independence.

Accordingly, today, we urge the parties to the conflict to give proof of moderation and to resume immediately the peace negotiations guided by the principles to which they themselves have agreed. We express our support for the recommendations contained in the Mitchell report aimed at putting an end to violence, at restoring confidence between the parties and at resuming the peace negotiations immediately.

Moreover, we join in the appeal for the establishment of monitoring machinery as proposed by the Group of 8, to help the parties in the implementation of the recommendations of that report, and we reiterate our belief that it will be possible to achieve a just and lasting peace in the Middle East, but only through dialogue and negotiation.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank the representative of Mexico for her kind words addressed to me.

The representative of Israel has asked for the floor to make an additional statement.

Mr. Lancry (Israel) (*spoke in French*): When this discussion began, I was given ample opportunity to put forward Israel's point of view. I would like in this regard to express my full gratitude. Nevertheless, this second statement seemed to me to be a necessary clarification at the end of this discussion, which has been clearly unequal in its content.

First of all, we take note of the urgent and relevant appeal for a return to reason and dialogue between Palestinians and Israelis based on a total cessation of violence and confrontation and on the implementation of the Mitchell plan.

A guiding principle of the peace process, the mutual recognition contracted between Israelis and Palestinians following the Oslo Accords remains a major basis for the ability of the two peoples to affirm the principle of their coexistence. The bedrock of the Oslo Accords linked to the intrinsically philosophical dimension of the Israeli-Palestinian relationship — that is to say moving from exclusion and reciprocal denial to mutual recognition — is still valid despite the tragic setback inherent in the current crisis.

It is this common basis, on which the future of both peoples, depends that we must make more visible and credible, through a political process free of any confrontation or terrorist constraint.

In the service of that objective, the Mitchell plan is a necessary and effective tool for a return to the logic of peace. It is this strong and necessary message that most Members of the Security Council have given pride of place.

The Mitchell report, agreed to by the two parties, could be immediately implemented if only the entry point, that is the end of violence and terrorism, were opened up.

This is precisely what is stipulated by the Mitchell report in its broad outlines. Israel has already shown its willingness for a return to the situation that prevailed before 28 September 2000. It is ready for an end to this confrontation on all fronts imposed for almost a year by Palestinians under the cover of an intifada, as soon Palestinian terrorism gives way to dialogue.

Consequently, rather than exacerbating an already sufficiently complex situation by introducing totally new international machinery, it is up to the Palestinian leadership to assume its responsibility by taking the necessary decision: that of doing away with all strains of terrorism, which are harmful to peace and hinder its painstaking realization.

Good-faith negotiation cannot endure even the smallest dose of terrorism — much less the Palestinian suicide attacks that throughout this conflict have been

used as a method of killing the maximal number of people.

It is once again imperative to eliminate terrorism and replace it with policy, a fundamental principle to which Chairman Arafat committed himself when he signed the Oslo Accords. That is an inviolable rule to which Chairman Arafat must bind his dialogue of peace.

Yesterday, permanent and non-permanent members of the Security Council indicated their firm and unequivocal condemnation of Palestinian terrorism. They spoke of their revulsion at the atrocious nature of certain Palestinian terrorist practices. Chairman Arafat must heed that powerful message. The condemnation of terrorism that underlay those Council members' appeal for a resumption of dialogue was highly significant. It essentially indicated the need to end the process by which terrorism and policy are becoming interchangeable. This mixture of the two is no longer acceptable; it could even undermine the remarkable political achievements made during the early days of the Oslo process.

Declared by the Mitchell report to be "reprehensible and unacceptable", Palestinian terrorism has now been rejected by nearly the entire Security Council.

Yet we are somewhat perplexed by statements made by certain participants in the debate, which were as inconsistent as they were self-contradictory. An example is the twofold position taken by the Permanent Representative of Pakistan. Our Pakistani colleague both affirmed that he "support[ed] the full implementation of the ... Mitchell report" (*supra, resumption 1*) and bridled at what he called a denial of "legitimacy and glory", referring to Palestinian terrorism. I say this with all the deference I feel towards my Pakistani colleague, whose statements on a variety of issues I invariably appreciate, but how can we seriously believe in the "legitimacy and glory" of suicidal terrorism and its gruesome effects?

In another vein, worthy of weightier discourse, I would like to respond to one of the comments of my Pakistani colleague. He said that "peace cannot be established through subjugation". I willingly agree with that, and recall in that context that peace was not obtained at Camp David precisely because of the flaw of subjugation: as a response to the comprehensive Israeli peace offer encompassing the main final-status issues, Israel found itself facing the threat of scheduled extinction by demographic drowning linked with the right of return of Palestinian refugees. We could not submit to subjugation of that kind.

This type of Security Council debate inevitably generates its share of tangential and outrageous rhetoric fueled by ranting. And the Permanent Representative of Iraq felt neither embarrassment nor restraint in engaging in unmatchable hyperbole: he accused Israel of nothing less than using nuclear and chemical weapons against the Palestinian people.

Soon after his Iraqi colleague, the Permanent Representative of Libya, in what appears to be a recurring rhetorical spasm, drew on his repertory of hatred and contempt for the Jewish people and for Israel.

Those two permanent representatives, of Iraq and of Libya, also represent the serene permanence of two eccentric dictatorships that, with noteworthy composure, advocate the eradication of the State of Israel. The most recent reminder of this anti-Israel penchant may be seen on page A-8 of today's *The New York Times*, which quotes the regime's number-two man, the Iraqi Vice-President, Izzat Ibrahim, as calling on the Arab and Islamic nation to combat Israel and "to expel the sons of monkeys and pigs, strangers on the land".

We Israelis have no particular reason to welcome such lessons of contempt and hatred, as taught in countries such as Iraq and Libya, but I wonder whether such rhetoric is the best way of serving the Palestinian cause.

As we have said, we consider the draft resolution being circulated at Palestinian behest to be utterly impracticable, despite its sophisticated crafting. The text is unilateral; it absolves the Palestinian side of any responsibility for its terrorist practices; and it strips the Mitchell plan of its bilateral dimension and uselessly burdens it with a totally superfluous international machinery.

We stress that our approach, which calls for direct bilateral negotiations on the implementation of the Mitchell report, enjoys significant support among key members of the Security Council. It is from that perspective — which encompasses the same means used during the most fruitful stages of the Israeli-

Palestinian peace process — that we invite our Palestinian partners to resume the dialogue.

Recent months, during which similar debates have taken place in the Security Council, have duly shown the futility of an exercise that would impose an unjustified and ineffective international presence. Only a return to the beginnings and the life-source of the historic turning taken by Palestinians and Israelis since Oslo will enable us to overcome our frustrations and attain the peace and coexistence that both our peoples deserve.

The announced meeting between Shimon Peres, the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Israel, and Chairman Yasser Arafat could indicate — at least, this is our conviction and our hope — such a new beginning.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): The Permanent Observer of Palestine has asked to make a statement, and I give him the floor.

Mr. Al-Kidwa (Palestine) (*spoke in Arabic*): As usual, the Permanent Representative of Israel to the United Nations has taken the lead in making statements that are so negative and self-contradictory that there is no option but to respond. In our opinion, the statement by the Permanent Representative of Israel yesterday was worse than what we are used to. It was so full of contradictions and, I would perhaps also say, lies — claiming that Israel's actions are in conformity with international law and that Orient House was used for terrorist purposes, et cetera — that we thought we would not respond to it. It was, in brief, a statement that was not worthy of response.

Despite that and despite the statement made yesterday, something related to the integrity of the Secretariat of the United Nations caught my attention. Yesterday, the Permanent Representative of Israel talked about a report by the fact-finding mission on the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) and criticized it. I simply ask: is there a report unknown to everyone save the Permanent Representative of Israel, or is there a report that was distributed to some Member States and not to others? Probably the ladies and gentlemen in the Secretariat of the United Nations could enlighten us in this regard. What is the real status of the report to which the Permanent Representative of Israel made reference? And how could he have read that report if it was not a general document available to all Member States of the United Nations?

Going back to the statements of the Permanent Representative of Israel, I will say that in his statement today, though his French language is far better than his English, the meanings are essentially not different from those of yesterday's statement. It seems that the Permanent Representative of Israel did not understand the interventions of more than 50 speakers, including the 15 members of the Security Council.

I may be wrong, but it seems to me that the overwhelming majority of the members of the Security Council, if not all of them, did support the idea that the Security Council must do something specific and tangible. The majority, if not all, supported the full implementation of the recommendations of the Mitchell report without any conditions. The overwhelming majority support the establishment of a monitoring mechanism to help in the implementation of those recommendations. Regarding the situation on the ground, the majority was against the bombings that took place in Israel. This again is our position, as well. There was a majority against the oppressive measures taken by Israel against the Palestinian people, a majority against collective punishment and the closure of areas, against Israeli occupation of Orient House and other Palestinian institutions in East Jerusalem, and a majority against extra-judiciary killings and all such measures. Most importantly, an overwhelming majority was against the Israeli occupation.

Despite all this, the Permanent Representative of Israel tells us today that the Mitchell recommendations could be implemented if the violence stops. Again, the same logic is used to assume that calm could lead to the implementation of the recommendations, and not the fact that implementing the recommendations will help de-escalate the situation. This is the logic of someone who does not accept this report and who is not at all keen on implementing those recommendations.

It must be said that with the same arrogance and disdain in addressing others, whatever their viewpoints may be, the Permanent Representative of Israel has referred to *The New York Times* today. Of course, *The New York Times* cannot be accused of supporting Palestinian positions. I do not know how he felt when he read the editorial in *The New York Times* and the front-page article on the Israeli checkpoints and how

these checkpoints make the life of the entire Palestinian populations hellish.

Is it not time for some moderation on the part of the Israelis? Is it not time for some honesty, introspection, some sort of respect for the international community, and some change from the previous positions, which will only lead us all to catastrophe?

The Israeli position extends even to the draft resolution, which was tabled informally — it has not yet been formally tabled for the members of the Security Council. Illogical and irrational criticism was directed at its language. This informal draft contains language agreed to by the entire membership of the Security Council last March. In fact, some deletions were made in the language agreed upon. Some issues opposed by one member of the Security Council were deleted, of course. The purpose was to attempt to have that member change its position. The draft resolution is not a Palestinian position, nor is it an Arab position. It is, however, a Palestinian attempt to remind the members of the Security Council what they agreed upon last March. What is the problem here with calling for the implementation of the recommendations of the Mitchell report or calling for an observer mechanism and the resumption of the peace process? What is the problem with this, except for some strange notions that the resolution uses language that takes the side of the Palestinians? What is the meaning of all this?

Quite frankly, we hope that the Council will take all this into consideration, that it will take into consideration the language submitted to it in the draft resolution and the positions of the Members of the United Nations. We also hope it will take into account the deep sense of frustration among many of the Members due to the lack of action by the Council on this situation and its lack of commitment and non-fulfilment of its responsibilities as contained in the Charter of the United Nations. We hope that this will be the end result.

Finally, I should like to comment on the possible meeting between Arafat and Peres. The Palestinian side has never opposed such a meeting — it has never opposed serious dialogue. The problem has been on the Israeli side. Were such a meeting to occur — neither the time nor the place for such a meeting has been determined — it would be subject to certain conditions dictated by the Prime Minister of Israel: no serious political questions could be discussed, but only issues related to the current security situation on the ground.

Frankly speaking, we do not believe that a meeting held in such circumstances would change anything, even though we will try. We have tried before and we will continue to try. However, if we are to be successful there must be a real change in the Israeli position — a change that will lead to different results, a change based on a political vision, not on manoeuvres aimed at hoodwinking the international community and at further eroding the Palestinian position.

We have not yet lost hope. However, if our hopes are to be fulfilled, we need the help of the Council. We appeal to the members of the Council, as representatives of the international community, to act in accordance with their duties and responsibilities under the Charter.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): There are no further speakers on my list. The Security Council has thus concluded the present stage of its consideration of the item on its agenda. The Council will remain seized of the matter.

The meeting rose at 5.05 p.m.